

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BANGKO 01276 01 OF 02 171220Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----171226Z 064921 /11

R 171115Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8309
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 1276

EXDIS

DEPT PASS CINCPAC. CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, TH, US
SUBJECT: DESIRE OF THE THAI GOVERNMENT FOR CLOSER COOPERATION
WITH THE UNITED STATES IN SEVERAL FIELDS

1. PRIME MINISTER THANIN KRAIWICHIAN INVITED ME TO AN INFORMAL LUNCH AT HIS OFFICE 17 JANUARY AND I WAS SURPRISED TO FIND ON MY ARRIVAL THAT THE OTHER GUESTS WERE THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND HIS DEPUTY, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF INDUSTRY. THE PRIME MINISTER OPENED THE DISCUSSION BY STATING THAT THERE WERE MANY MATTERS ON WHICH THE THAI GOVERNMENT NEEDED ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE. IT WAS HIS DESIRE TO ESTABLISH THE CLOSEST POSSIBLE LINKS BETWEEN THAILAND AND THE UNITED STATES, AND TODAY'S LUNCHEON SHOULD BE VIEWED AS THE OPENING OF CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS ON MATTERS OF COMMON INTEREST. HE SAID THAT THE DISCUSSIONS SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT INFORMALLY AND CANDIDLY, AND
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PROPOSED THAT TODAY'S DISCUSSION BE USED TO OPEN UP VARIOUS AVENUES WHICH COULD THEN BE PURSUED AT SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS.

2. INAUGURAL SPEECH. AFTER MOVING INTO THE NEARBY CONFERENCE ROOM WHERE LUNCH WAS SERVED, THE PRIME MINISTER LED OFF BY STATING THAT THAILAND AND THE

OTHER COUNTRIES OF ASEAN WERE HOPEFUL THAT PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER WOULD MENTION THE IMPORTANCE THE UNITED STATES ATTACHES TO ASEAN IN HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS. (THIS PORTION OF THE CONVERSATION IS BEING REPORTED SEPTTEL.)

3. THAILAND'S IMAGE. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD VERY WELL HOW DIFFICULT IT WOULD BE FOR AMERICA OR ANY OTHER COUNTRY TO SUPPORT HIS GOVERNMENT IF ITS IMAGE WAS SUCH THAT OPINION MAKERS WERE INTENSELY CRITICAL OF THAILAND. HE SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THAILAND'S IMAGE WAS VERY BAD, AND HE ASKED FOR MY ADVICE ON CORRECTIVE MEASURES WHICH COULD BE PUT INTO EFFECT. I SAID (AS I HAD TO THE KING'S PRIVATE SECRETARY WHEN HE RAISED THE SAME QUESTION WITH ME SOME TIME AGO) THAT THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE LYNCHINGS OF OCTOBER 6TH HAD OBVIOUSLY DONE THAILAND A LOT OF HARM. IN MY VIEW, LITTLE COULD BE DONE TO REDRESS THE IMPACT OF THESE PHOTOGRAPHS, BUT MANY STATEMENTS CONTINUED TO BE MADE ON THE SUBJECT OF THE MILITARY TAKE-OVER WHICH THE RTG MIGHT BE MORE THOROUGH IN CORRECTING. I ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THAI DIPLOMATS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES MIGHT BE INSTRUCTED TO DO MORE TO REACH OPINION MAKERS AND TO CORRECT MISSTATEMENTS MADE WITH REGARD TO EVENTS IN RECENT THAI HISTORY. FINALLY, I PUT FORWARD VERY GINGERLY THE THOUGHT THAT IN TODAY'S WORLD A CONSPICUOUS DEGREE OF ANTI-COMMUNIST MILITANCY WAS SOMETIMES MISUNDERSTOOD. THE PRIME MINISTER THEN HELD FORTH ON THE THEME THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT NOT TO SHOW WEAKNESS TO THE COMMUNISTS AND THAT
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THE LOSS OF ANTI-COMMUNIST MILITANCY BY THE U.S. HAD BEEN A MISTAKE. IT WAS IMPORTANT NOT ONLY TO THE U.S. BUT TO ITS FRIENDS THAT WE STAND FIRM IN THE FACE OF THE COMMUNIST MENACE. (WHEN I LATER HAD A PRIVATE MOMENT WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER, HE EXPRESSED HIS PARTICULAR APPRECIATION FOR THIS PART OF MY COMMENT AS HE SAID HE AND OTHERS HAD BEEN TRYING, WITHOUT SUCCESS, TO MODIFY THE PRIME MINISTER'S BLATANT ANTI-COMMUNISM.)

4. IRRIGATION. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT ANOTHER FILED IN WHICH THAILAND AND THE UNITED STATES MIGHT WORK TOGETHER WAS IRRIGATION. IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO IMPROVE THE LIVING STANDARD OF THE RURAL POPULATION AND TO INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY. I INQUIRED WHETHER HE HAD MAJOR DAM AND CANAL SYSTEMS IN MIND OR WHETHER HE WAS TALKING ABOUT LOCAL WATER CATCHMENTS. I ALSO TRIED TO DRAW THE PRIME MINISTER OUT AS TO WHETHER HE WAS THINKING OF INSURGENCY-RELATED PROJECTS IN SENSITIVE AREAS OR TO TRULY ECONOMIC PROJECTS. THE PRIME MINISTER ANSWERED

THAT HE WAS NOT, REPEAT, NOT TALKING ABOUT LARGE DAMS
WITH HYDROELECTRIC POTENTIAL BUT SMALLER PROJECTS WHICH
WOULD ASSIST REMOTE COMMUNITIES. HE SAID HIS OBJECTIVE
WAS BOTH THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION AS
WELL AS THE POSSIBLE POLITICAL EFFECT ON INSURGENT AREAS.
(COMMENT: I WAS GIVEN THE IMPRESSION THAT THE PRIME
MINISTER HAD NOT THOUGHT OUT THE REMIFICATIONS OF POSSIBLE
IRRIGATION SCHEMES AND THAT MY QUESTIONS WERE, IN FACT,
OPENING UP NEW GROUNDS. I UNDERTOOK TO MEET LATER IN
THE WEEK WITH THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE BUT NOTED THAT
FURTHER CONVERSATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT SHOULD BE HELD IN
THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE FACT THAT THE U.S. WAS NOT,
REPEAT, NOT IN A POSITION TO FURTHER PROJECTS IN THIS
FIELD IN ANY SIGNIFICANT WAY.)

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CINCPAC.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

-----171223Z 064886 /17

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AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 1276

EXDIS

DEPT PASS CINCPAC. CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

5. NARCOTICS. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT WHILE IT

MIGHT APPEAR THAT LITTLE HAD BEEN HAPPENING ON THE NARCOTICS FRONT, HE HAD, IN FACT, BEEN BUSY MAKING THE LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS NECESSARY FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION COMMISSION. HE SAID HE APPRECIATED TREMENDOUSLY THE RECENTLY DONATED 5 HELICOPTERS, AND IN THE COURSE OF OUR CONVERSATIONS IN THE FUTURE WE WOULD PURSUE WHAT MORE THE UNITED STATES AND THAILAND COULD DO TOGETHER IN THIS FIELD. HE SAID THAT HE WISHED TO ENLARGE THE BORDER PATROL POLICE AND TO ESTABLISH MORE POSTS ALONG THE BURMESE AND LAO BORDERS. HE SAID HE WISHED TO INITIATE CLOSE COOPERATION WITH THE LAO AND BURMESE GOVERNMENTS BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, HE INTENDED TO CRACK DOWN ON THE TRADITIONAL TRAFFICKERS AND TO DO SO WOULD REQUIRE AN INCREASE IN BPP STAFFING AND MATERIEL. I SAID THAT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO ASSIST IN VARIOUS WAYS BUT POINTED OUT THAT WE WERE FORBIDDEN TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO POLICE

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FORCES SAVE FOR NARCOTICS MATTERS.

6. OIL. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT HE WAS ANXIOUS TO FACILITATE ADDITIONAL AMERICAN INVESTMENT IN THAILAND AND ASKED FOR MY VIEWS. I SAID THAT WE WELCOMED THE STEPS HIS GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN, BUT THAT AMERICAN COMPANIES WOULD PROBABLY BE WATCHING VERY CLOSELY THE PROGRESS MADE BY BILLINGTON (TIN), THAI ZINC, THE GAS PROJECT IN THE GULF OF SIAM AND WERE ALSO ALWAYS CONCERNED WITH THE TREATMENT THEY RECEIVED AT THE HANDS OF THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT. THE PRIME MINISTER ACTED AS THOUGH HE HAD NEVER HEARD OF THE WORK PERMIT AND THE RESIDENCE PERMIT PROBLEMS OF FOREIGNERS IN THAILAND. THE FOREIGN MINISTER FILLED HIM IN ON THEIR GRIEVANCES. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT HE ATTACHED THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO DEVELOPING THAILAND'S OIL RESOURCES TO THE MAXIMUM. ACTION WAS BEING TAKEN WITH REGARD TO OIL AND GAS IN THE GULF OF SIAM, BUT HE ALSO HOPED THAT AMERICAN COMPANIES WOULD UNDERTAKE EXPLORATION IN NORTH AND NORTHEAST THAILAND. IN THE DISCUSSION WHICH FOLLOWED, I POINTED OUT THAT THE OIL COMPANIES DO NOT DRILL EXPLORATORY WELLS UNLESS THEY HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THEY WILL STRIKE OIL. THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY UNDERTOOK TO MEET WITH US AND PASS ON THOSE INDICATIONS AVAILABLE TO THAI AUTHORITIES OF POSSIBLE OIL DEPOSITS IN SEVERAL AREAS.

7. CONTACTS WITH UNITED STATES OFFICIALS. AS THE GROUP DEPARTED, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT HE VERY MUCH HOPED THAT MANY AMERICAN SENATORS, CON-

GRESSMEN AND OFFICIALS OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH
WOULD BE COMING TO THAILAND IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
HE SAID HE BELIEVED THAT THE SITUATION HERE WAS
UNDERSTANDABLY NOT VERY CLEAR TO FOREIGN OBSERVERS
AND THAT HE WOULD DO HIS UTMOST TO EXPLAIN HIS
GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE AND POLICIES TO SUCH VISITORS
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WHENEVER THEY CAME. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT
AT SOME LATER DATE HE VERY MUCH HOPED HE WOULD
HAVE A CHANCE TO GO TO THE UNITED STATES, BUT THIS
WAS NOT SOMETHING THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED AT THIS
TIME. I SAID I BELIEVE THAT VISITORS REPRESENTING
THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WOULD PROBABLY COMMENCE
TO TRAVEL IN THE RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE AND ASSURED
THE PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER THAT WE
WOULD LET THEM KNOW AS SOON AS WE HEARD OF THE
PLANS OF CONGRESSIONAL OR EXECUTIVE BRANCH VISITORS.

8. COMMENT: IT APPEARS TO ME THAT THIS RATHER
CURIOUS EPISODE FITS INTO THE PATTERN OF THE UN-
USUALLY WARM WELCOME GIVEN ADMIRAL WEISNER LAST
WEEK AND THAT THE RTG IS MAKING A VERY CONSIDERABLE
EFFORT TO ELICIT OUR SUPPORT AND COOPERATION. THE
THREAD WHICH RAN THROUGHOUT THE FOREGOING TOPICS
WAS THAT THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION WAS THE IMPORTANCE
THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WOULD ATTACH TO SOUTHEAST
ASIA AND THAT IF, AS THE THAI VERY MUCH HOPED, THIS
QUESTION WAS ANSWERED IN A POSITIVE SENSE, THE
OTHER MATTERS OF DETAIL WOULD TAKE CARE OF
THEMSELVES.
WHITEHOUSE

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CINCPAC.

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